

Message Text

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15

ORIGIN NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 EUR-12 IO-11 ISO-00 SSM-05 SAB-01

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15 SAJ-01 SAM-01 ACDA-10

MC-02 AID-05 EB-07 NRC-07 ERDA-07 /142 R

DRAFTED BY NEA/P:MVANORDER

APPROVED BY NEA/P:GFSHERMAN

S/PRS - MR. FUNSETH (INFO)

H - MR. FLATEN (INFO)

EUR/P - MR. JERABEK

IO/P - MR. BLACHLY

SSM - MS. GREEN

NEA/ARP - MR. AHERNE

AF/P - MR. POPE

NEA - MS. GRIFFIN

----- 025089

R 160107Z MAR 76

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

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AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

USMISSION NATO
AMEMBASSY SANA
AMEMBASSY TUNIS
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
USMISSION SINAI
USCINCEUR

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GENEVA FOR MEPC DEL, CINCEUR FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING

FOR YOUR INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE FOLLOWING ARE EXCERPTS
FROM DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN'S PRESS BRIEFING FOR
MARCH 15, 1976:

Q. DO YOU HAVE ANY REACTION TO THE EGYPTIAN DECISION TO
ABROGATE THE FRIENDSHIP TREATY WITH THE SOVIET UNION?

A. NO, I HAVE NO REACTION TO THAT.

Q. I MEAN -- ANY COMMENT?

A. NO, NO COMMENT.

Q. IF WE CAN GO BACK TO THIS EGYPTIAN-SOVIET THING
FOR A MINUTE, YOU SAY YOU HAVE NO REACTION, NO COMMENT.
WAS THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT INFORMED IN ADVANCE OF
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MR. SADAT'S STATEMENT YESTERDAY?

A. NOT THAT I AM AWARE OF.

Q. WILL YOU FIND OUT FOR US?

Q. DID YOU KNOW WHEN EILTS WAS HERE LAST WEEK?

A. I CAN'T ANSWER THAT.

Q. IN THE ADMINISTRATION'S VIEW, WHAT DOES THIS DO TO THE
PENDING PROPOSAL FOR SENDING SIX C-130'S TO EGYPT? WHAT
EFFECT DOES THAT HAVE ON THE SITUATION IN CONGRESS?

A. I THINK THE ACTION IS CONSISTENT WITH WHAT WE HAVE BEEN TELLING THE CONGRESS -- AND FOR THAT MATTER THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT: THAT IT IS OUR VIEW THAT PRESIDENT SADAT HAS BEEN TRYING TO DECREASE HIS DEPENDENCE ON THE SOVIET UNION.

Q. DOES THE ADMINISTRATION BELIEVE THIS STATEMENT WILL HELP ITS ARGUMENT?

A. I WAS JUST SPEAKING PERSONALLY. I AM NOT SPEAKING FOR THE ADMINISTRATION. I DON'T HAVE ANY COMMENT ON IT.

Q. DID YOU SAY "DECREASE ITS DEPENDENCE?"

A. ON THE SOVIET UNION. WE SAID THIS WHEN WE --

Q. THE WORD IS "DEPENDENCE"?

A. DEPENDENCE, YES.

Q. ON THE C-130'S, IS IT YOUR UNDERSTANDING THAT THE ADMINISTRATION INTENDED TO SPECIALLY CONFIGURE THE C-130'S FOR ELECTRONIC SURVEILLANCE PURPOSES AND TO SELL TO EGYPT SIMULTANEOUS WITH THE SALE THE BULK OF RADAR EQUIPMENT THAT HAS NOT PREVIOUSLY BEEN DISCLOSED?

A. NO. MY UNDERSTANDING WAS THAT WE WERE SELLING SIX C-130'S TRANSPORT AIRCRAFT.
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Q. COULD WE HAVE AN INQUIRY AS TO WHETHER THEY WILL CONTAIN THAT EQUIPMENT?

A. I HAD NOT HEARD THIS POINT THAT HAS JUST BEEN RAISED. IS WILL LOOK INTO THAT.

Q. DID THE ADMINISTRATION PRESS MR. SADAT TO TAKE THIS MOVE?

A. NO. THAT WAS STRICTLY A DECISION OBVIOUSLY TAKEN BY THE EGYPTIAN GOVERNMENT.

Q. HAVE THE THREE SENATORS WHO SUGGESTED THE COMPROMISE OF LAST WEEK MADE ANY INQUIRIES YET AT THE STATE DEPARTMENT ABOUT WHAT THE SECRETARY SAID ON FRIDAY ABOUT GOING THE ROUTE OF THE FMS?

A. FMS?

Q. FMS RATHER THAN COMMERCIAL ARRANGEMENTS?

-A. NOT THAT I HAVE BEEN INFORMED OF, NO.

Q. HAS THERE BEEN ANY DECISION REACHED ON THAT BY THE STATE DEPARTMENT, WHICH ROUTE TO TAKE?

A. THE SECRETARY SAID ON FRIDAY THAT HE THOUGHT THE MOST LIKELY ROUTE WAS THE FMS ROUTE.

Q. WHY?

A. BECAUSE THAT SEEMED TO BE THE MOST FEASIBLE ROUTE.

Q. FOR WHAT REASON? WHY IS IT?

A. IN THE FIRST PLACE, IT IS CONSISTENT WITH, I THINK, OUR UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT THE CONGRESS' INTENTIONS WERE ON FUTURE SALES OF MILITARY-TYPE EQUIPMENT TO ANOTHER COUNTRY. SECONDLY, IT IS MILITARY EQUIPMENT. THEY ARE MILITARY TRANSPORT, AND FOR THAT REASON THE FOREIGN MILITARY SALES UNCLASSIFIED

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ROUTE SEEMS THE LOGICAL ROUTE TO FOLLOW WHEN YOU ARE SELLING THAT KIND OF EQUIPMENT.

Q. THE SECRETARY HAVING SAID THAT ON FRIDAY, WHAT IS THE CURRENT HOLDUP ON THE ADMINISTRATION'S ACTUAL PRESENTATION OF THIS TO CONGRESS?

A. THE PRESIDENTIAL DETERMINATION STILL HAS NOT BEEN MADE.

Q. PRESIDENTIAL DETERMINATION OF THE NEED?

A. THE LETTER OF DETERMINATION HAS TO GO TO THE CONGRESS, AND THAT HAS NOT AS YET BEEN DONE.

Q. LETTER OF OFFER?

A. YES.

Q. WHY HAS IT NOT BEEN DONE?

A. I DO NOT HAVE AN ANSWER TO THAT. BECAUSE THE PRESIDENT OBVIOUSLY HASN'T MADE HIS DECISION YET, I WOULD GUESS.

Q. I AM STILL BAFFLED WHY YOU REFRAINED FROM COMMENTING ON PRESIDENT SADAT'S DECISION.

A. WHY?

Q. BECAUSE THIS IS THE ESSENCE OF AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY, TO DECREASE SOVIET INVOLVEMENT AND INFLUENCE IN THE MIDDLE EAST, ESPECIALLY IN EGYPT. AND HERE YOU ARE, YOU HAVE ACHIEVED SOMETHING LIKE THAT.

A. PRESIDENT SADAT HAS SPOKEN TO HIS PARLIAMENT, OR TO HIS ASSEMBLY, AND MADE A STATEMENT OF POLICY; AND I DO NOT THINK, OR WE DO NOT BELIEVE, THAT WE SHOULD COMMENT.

Q. YOU ARE NOT PLEASED WITH THIS STATEMENT?

A. OBVIOUSLY IN THE OVERALL, IT IS CONSISTENT WITH WHAT WE HAVE BEEN DESCRIBING TO THE CONGRESS; BUT WE ARE NOT UNCLASSIFIED

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COMMENTING TODAY SPECIFICALLY ON PRESIDENT SADAT'S SPEECH.

Q. DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING ON THE REPORT ON FBIS, CARRIED AS A RUMOR, CARRIED AS WELL AS BEING UNTRUE, ABOUT SYRIAN TROOPS MOVING INTO LEBANON?

A. I HAVE SEEN NO CONFIRMING EVIDENCE. I SAW A REPORT

THERE WERE A THOUSAND SYRIANS THAT PERHAPS HAD RECENTLY MOVED INTO LEBANON. BUT WE HAVE NO CONFIRMING EVIDENCE ON THAT REPORT.

I MIGHT JUST SAY ON LEBANON, WE HAVE BEEN IN TOUCH WITH OUR EMBASSY TODAY, AND ALL OF OUR PEOPLE THERE ARE WELL AND APPARENTLY DO NOT FEEL THEY ARE UNDER ANY PARTICULAR DANGER.

Q. ON THE PLA, ARE THERE MORE PLA TROOPS MOVING IN? DO YOU HAVE ANY EVIDENCE OF THAT?

A. I DO NOT HAVE ANYTHING ON THAT.

Q. HOW MANY PLA TROOPS ARE THERE IN LEBANON NOW?

A. I DO NOT KNOW.

Q. WE ASKED A QUESTION ABOUT THIS A LONG TIME AGO AND WE NEVER DID GET AN ANSWER.

A. LET ME CHECK INTO IT.

Q. THE SECRETARY SAID THAT HE WOULD NOT TOLERATE -- OR WORDS TO THAT EFFECT -- INTERFERENCE IN LEBANON -- QUOTE -- "FROM ANY QUARTER" -- UNQUOTE. IF SYRIAN TROOPS ARE IN FACT REPORTED TO BE IN LEBANON, ISN'T THIS RATHER A DIFFICULT SITUATION FOR THE UNITED STATES TO FACE?

A. WE STAND BY THE STATEMENT I MADE ON THURSDAY OR FRIDAY ON LEBANON -- I BELIEVE IT WAS ON FRIDAY. AND AS UNCLASSIFIED

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FAR AS THE REPORTS THAT I HAVE BEEN ASKED ABOUT, WE DON'T HAVE ANY CONFIRMING EVIDENCE.

Q. THERE'S A NEW ELEMENT, THE QUESTION OF FRANJIYAH REMAINING OR NOT. DO YOU WISH HIM TO GO?

A. I AM NOT GOING TO COMMENT ON THAT SITUATION.

Q. THE QUESTION OCCURS TO ME WHEN YOU ARE BEING ASKED ABOUT THESE REPORTS, THE CURRENT REPORT THIS MORNING, WHETHER YOU ARE SAYING YOU HAVE CHECKED THEM AND

YOU HAVE NO CONFIRMING EVIDENCE, OR YOU MEANT THAT YOU PREVIOUSLY HAD NO CONFIRMING EVIDENCE ON THE EARLIER REPORT.

A. I CHECKED THIS MORNING.

Q. CAN YOU GIVE US ANY INFORMATION ON THE MOVEMENTS OF THE U.S. AMBASSADORS IN THE MIDDLE EAST WHO WERE SUPPOSED TO BE RECALLED FOR CONSULTATION?

A. AMBASSADORS PICKERING AND MURPHY WILL STILL BE COMING TO WASHINGTON FOR CONSULTATIONS, BUT NO DATES HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED AS YET. I CHECKED THIS MORNING.

Q. ANY COMMENTS ON THE SHAH OF IRAN'S INTERVIEW TO U.S. NEWS AND WORLD REPORT SAYING HE WILL CUT OFF OIL IF THE CONGRESS CUTS OFF WEAPONS?

A. I HAVE NO COMMENT ON THAT.

Q. THE CIA REPORTED, ACCORDING TO THE WASHINGTON POST, FROM AN OBSERVER WHO WAS THERE THAT ISRAEL HAS TEN TO TWENTY NUCLEAR WEAPONS. DO YOU HAVE SOMETHING ON THAT?

A. I WOULD JUST REPEAT WHAT WE HAVE SAID IN THE PAST ON THIS SUBJECT: THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT HAS SAID -- AND I BELIEVE IT WAS REAFFIRMED AS RECENTLY AS YESTERDAY AFTER A CABINET MEETING -- THAT ISRAEL WILL NOT BE THE FIRST TO INTRODUCE NUCLEAR WEAPONS IN THE MIDDLE EAST.
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AND PRIME MINISTER RABIN, HIMSELF, AS RECENTLY AS, I THINK, LAST SEPTEMBER IN AN INTERVIEW ON AN AMERICAN TELEVISION NETWORK SAID, "ISRAEL IS A NON-NUCLEAR COUNTRY."

Q. DID HE SAY THAT, OR DID HE SAY IT WOULD NOT BE THE FIRST TO INTRODUCE NUCLEAR WEAPONS?

A. HE SAID THAT ALSO. HE SAID BOTH.

Q. NOW, IF I MAY JUST ASK ONE MORE, PLEASE, WITH THE INDULGENCE AND PATIENCE OF EVERYBODY. ON FRIDAY I HAPPENED, UNLUCKILY, NOT TO HAVE BEEN HERE. I UNDERSTAND THAT THE SHEEHAN THING WAS REPORTED BY A HIGH AUTHORITY HERE AS BEING CLOSED. I WOULD LIKE TO KNOW THAT, SINCE MR. SHEEHAN FOR HIS ARTICLE IN FOREIGN POLICY OF ABOUT 2100 WORDS, AND HE IS WRITING A BOOK ON THE RESULTS OF HIS INQUIRIES AND INTERVIEWS, WE CAN ASSUME THAT A GREAT

DEAL MORE THAN WHAT HAS ALREADY BEEN PUBLISHED IS AVAILABLE TO HIM FROM THIS DEPARTMENT.

ISN'T IT FAIR THAT THE STATE DEPARTMENT NOW MAKE AVAILABLE TO EVERYBODY IN THIS ROOM THE MATERIALS THAT MR. SHEEHAN HAD MADE AVAILABLE TO HIM?

A. IF YOU WILL REREAD, OR READ, THE TRANSCRIPT OF FRIDAY'S BRIEFING BY MR. EAGLEBURGER, YOU WILL NOTE THAT NO MATERIALS WERE MADE AVAILABLE TO MR. SHEEHAN. HE WAS GIVEN ORAL BRIEFINGS.

Q. WELL, THE MATERIAL THAT WAS READ ORALLY. WAS THERE A RECORD KEPT OF THAT?

A. NO, THERE WAS NO RECORD.

Q. SO WE DON'T KNOW ACTUALLY WHAT WAS GIVEN TO MR. SHEEHAN, DO WE, AT THIS POINT?

A. WE DO NOT HAVE A WRITTEN RECORD OF CONVERSATIONS, IF THAT IS WHAT YOU ARE ASKING. THERE IS NO WRITTEN UNCLASSIFIED

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RECORD. THEY WERE ORAL BACKGROUND BRIEFINGS.

Q. ANOTHER POINT IS, I WOULD LIKE TO PURSUE THIS FURTHER AT A LATER DATE, IF I MIGHT, BECAUSE I THINK IT IS GOING TO BE IMPORTANT IN DEALING WITH THE WHOLE SITUATION AS TO HOW MUCH IS GIVEN OUT AND HOW MUCH ISN'T. BUT SINCE YOU DON'T HAVE THE ANSWER, THERE IS NO POINT IN PRESSING IT. BUT I WOULD LIKE TO KNOW WHETHER OR NOT THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES HAS EXPRESSED REGRETS TO THE GOVERNMENTS NAMED IN THE SHEEHAN MATERIAL ON THE LEAKAGE OF INFORMATION, IN VIEW OF THE FACT THAT TWO REBUKES WERE GIVEN FROM THAT PODIUM AT WHICH YOU ARE STANDING TO A PARTICULAR GOVERNMENT OVER LEAKAGES OF MATERIAL, WHICH THE SECRETARY OF STATE WAS, OR THE PRESIDENT WAS INDIGNANT ABOUT, AND RIGHTLY SO.

A. I HAVE BEEN INFORMED THAT AS OF NOW NO CONTACTS HAVE
BEEN MADE WITH FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS ON THIS SUBJECT.

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<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

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